

Update on Red Imported Fire Ant, a Quarantined Pest in OK

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The red imported fire ant (RIFA), *Solenopsis invicta* Buren (Hymenoptera: Formicidae), was recorded in parts of Oklahoma as early as 1985, but was probably present in the state before that time. It has been found at one time or another in 42 Oklahoma counties as of August 2008 (Fig. 1). Currently, eight counties are federally quarantined in Oklahoma and APHIS is considering expanding that to include the two southernmost “tiers” of Oklahoma counties. Distribution of RIFA in Oklahoma is disjunct, most likely due to artificial movement of regulated nursery and sod materials prior to quarantine restrictions, and is currently being reevaluated. Upon completion of the survey, a new map will be published which more accurately reflects RIFA distribution within the state.

Information about RIFA quarantine regulations and their impact on nursery, sod, and other industries can be found at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/fireants/index.shtml

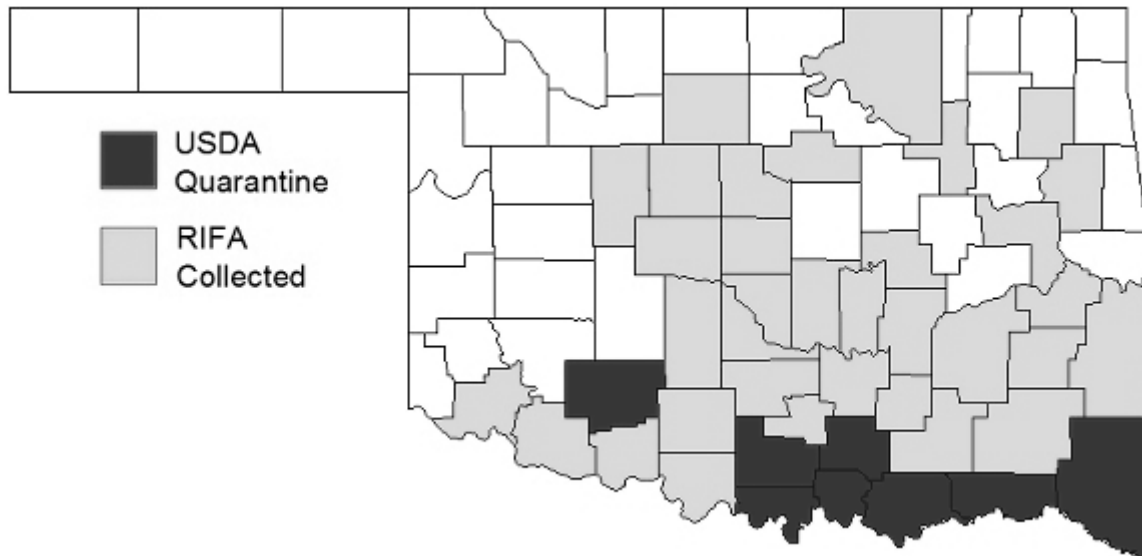


Figure 1. Quarantine map for red imported fire ant in Oklahoma as of August 2008 (Source: Oklahoma State University, Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Lab).

Release and monitoring of fire ant decapitating flies, *Pseudacteon* spp. continues and is coordinated through Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry and administered by OSU Extension educators in several southeastern counties.